

FILE

25X1

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DATE 6/13/86 FILEDOC NO EURM 86-20083P&PD 1OCR 3

9 June 1986

Turkish Reactions to the US-Libyan Conflict: Motivation and Rationale

25X1

Summary

The Turks are pursuing a carefully balanced policy toward Libya in order to maintain their ties both to the US--an "ally and friend"--and to Libya--a "friend and brother Islamic state." The Turks' ambivalence is reflected in their cautious public criticism of the US's Libyan policy.

25X6

25X6

At the same time, Turkey has moved quietly but effectively to forestall attacks on American interests in Turkey and to remove incriminated Libyan officials from the country. Turkey's disapproval of US policy toward Libya is rooted in economic interests and historical ties to the country, greater concern with other sources of terrorism, and long borders with other militant Arab and Islamic states. We believe Turkey will continue to balance its interests with the US against its stake in good relations with Libya, and that the odds therefore are against any highly visible change in its present carefully ambiguous posture.

25X6

25X1

Turkey's reaction to the US air strike against Libya and terrorist attacks against US targets has been rather subdued. Turkish leaders have expressed regret at the violence associated with US actions, and have publicly claimed the US attack was not compatible with international law. They have also made it clear that they are not disposed to impose economic or diplomatic sanctions against Libya. In spite of solid evidence linking the

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of European Analysis. Questions and comments are welcome and may be addressed to [redacted] Chief, West European Division,

25X1

25X1

25X1

EUR M86-20083

25X1

25X1

Libyan People's Bureau in Ankara to attempted terrorist attacks against Americans, the Turks have shown no interest in reducing the size of the Libyan representation and refused the US request for formal expulsion of the Libyan ambassador. They have pressed instead for quiet removal of Libyan officials implicated in terrorist activities. [redacted]

25X1

There are many reasons for Turkey's unwillingness to align itself with the US against Libya, or even to fall in with the EC consensus. Perhaps the most important is economic self-interest.

[redacted] they are determined to maintain their long-standing economic and commercial relationship with Libya, which they view as a valuable market for Turkish goods and services. Moreover, Turkey has accumulated a total of over \$8 billion in construction projects in Libya, and some 30,000 Turks presently work there. Libya also is a significant source of Turkish oil, currently accounting for about 18 percent of all imports. If Turkey falls out with Libya--apart from the potential long-term costs--it also risks immediate financial losses. The Libyans owe a total of about \$3 billion to Turkey-[redacted]

25X6

25X1

25X1

The Turkish government also must take into account strong public sentiment in favor of Libya. Libya was a loyal outpost of the Ottoman Empire until seized by Italy in 1911, and many Turks still accept the idea of a "special relationship" between their country and Libya. Initial public sentiment after the US raid against Tripoli and Benghazi was largely in favor of Libya, and the Turkish press regularly trumpets the notion of Islamic solidarity and Turkey's historical friendship with Libya. Not only the Turkish people, but presumably many officials as well, remember that Libya helped Turkey by supplying aviation fuel during its 1974 intervention on Cyprus and offered some financial support during the subsequent US arms embargo. The potential for a severe public relations problem for the government was illustrated by a press report that 7000 Turks in Istanbul had volunteered after the US attack to help Libya defend itself against the "infidel." [redacted]

25X1

25X6

25X1

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

More generally, the Turks view Libyan terrorism as only a small part of the potential terrorist threat which confronts them. From the Turkish perspective, Kurdish separatist violence and terrorism is a much more serious problem, and one which the Libyans could readily aggravate even if Turkey were to sever diplomatic relations. The allegedly million-plus Iranians in Turkey also seem to Ankara to be a greater potential problem than the Libyans. [redacted] a manageable [redacted]

25X6

25X6

25X1

25X6

[redacted]

Psychological factors--such as pique and resentment of foreign interference--also may lie behind Turkey's reluctance to cooperate with the US against Libya. The Turks were stung by Western charges of human rights abuses in their own successful campaign against domestic terrorism after 1980, and resent what they feel is Western indifference to the threat of Armenian terrorism. As a result, some Turkish officials may be adverse to following the US lead against a threat not aimed directly at Turkey. These same emotions--as well as confidence in Turkey's ability to handle terrorist threats without assistance--may lie behind Turkey's reluctance to coordinate anti-terrorist efforts with the US, [redacted]

25X1

25X6

25X6

At the same time, the Turks have no tolerance for terrorism and are prepared to take tough action to prevent terrorist incidents and apprehend would-be terrorists. [redacted]

25X1

25X6

25X6

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

for the withdrawal [redacted] of Libyan officials implicated in terrorist activity, including the Libyan ambassador. Moreover, during the current trial of the perpetrators of an attempted grenade attack on a US officers club in Ankara, three Libyan diplomatic and consular personnel allegedly involved were formally indicted despite claims of diplomatic immunity. Though this probably reflected a peculiarity in the Turkish legal system more than a calculated shift in policy, and though the court subsequently quashed the indictment, it nevertheless demonstrated Turkish determination to crack down on terrorist activity. [redacted]

25X6

25X1

We believe Turkey will continue to balance its interests with the US against its stake in good relations with Libya, and that the odds therefore are against any highly visible change in its present carefully ambiguous posture. It is possible, however, that in unobtrusive ways the Turks may take further actions in consonance with US policy goals toward Libya. Their recent decisions to indict the Libyan consul general in Istanbul and to press for the removal of the Libyan ambassador represent a departure from their previous position of studied neutrality. Additional actions along these lines are possible, especially if Libyan activities in Turkey continue to pose a threat to internal security and Libyan financial difficulties continue to erode the value of the Libyan market. Turkish actions probably will fall short, however, of an open break with Libya or a public endorsement of US actions. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

SUBJECT: Turkish Reactions to the US-Libyan Conflict:
Motivation and Rationale

Distribution:

Original 1 - William Rope, EUR/SE, State
1 - Peter Sommers, NSC
2 - D/EURA
2 - EURA Production Staff
4 - IMC/CB
1 - C/WE
1 - WE/IAB Production File
1 - WE/IAB (McGuinness)
1 - NIO/WE

ORIG:EUR/WE/IAB/ (9 June 1986)

25X1

25X1